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MEDIA-REMEMBERING THE FALKLANDS WAR: SUBJECTIVITY AND IDENTIFICATION

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Abstract

This paper explores the ways in which remembering is enacted, performed and contested with media and how this becomes intrinsically linked to issues of power, agency and identity. Drawing on ethnographic data collected with Falkland Islanders during the 30th Anniversary of the 1982 Falklands War I critically consider the context, motivation and agency involved in how and why Islanders remember through and with the media, and the potentially profound implications this may be having on their understanding, negotiation and performance of identity, that is (at times) at odds with their everyday existence. The result of the analysis raises critical questions about what societies remember, and want to be remembered for, the implications of which extend far beyond the Falklands.

Keywords: Media, Memory, Identity, Agency, Falklands, War, Remembrance, Commemoration.

There is a rapidly expanding body of work dedicated to media and memory. Some consider the media's decisive role in the capturing storing, retrieving, 'reactivating', preserving, (re)constituting and shaping of collective memories and understandings of the past (see Connerton, 1989; Edgerton, 2000; Gedi and Elam, 1996; Halbwachs, 1992; Hoskins, 2004; Hoskins and O'Loughlin, 2010; Huyssen, 2000; Landsberg, 2004; Neiger et al, 2011; Schwartz, 1982, 1991; Zelizer, 1992). Others consider the utility of media as a methodological tool through which to explore how personal, individual memory intersects with shared, collective, cultural, public forms of memory (for example Kuhn 2002; 2010). Less attention however has been paid to the ways in which memory (or what I suggest here is 'remembering') is enacted and performed with *the* media and how this becomes intrinsically linked to issues of identity, power and agency in the competition to privilege one's own remembering (see Sturken, 1997); in short, how negotiations of remembering and identity can shape, and be shaped by representations prevalent in the media.

Drawing upon interview data collected from Falkland Islanders during the 30th Anniversary of the 1982 Falklands war, here I examine the context, motivation and agency involved in how and why Islanders remember (the war, the past) with the - predominantly news - media and the relationship this has to their claims to agency, power and identity. In so doing, I raise critical questions about what Islanders want to remember, and want to be remembered for, and how this intersects with notions of agency and public rationalizations of identity, the implications of which extend far beyond the Falklands. How, for example, do interactions with media producers inform a performance, projection or negotiation of remembering from which public 'remembering' texts are constructed? What does remembering with media producers reveal about what 'remembering' actor(s) (want to) remember and be remembered for? And critically, where is agency of those remembering, or being remembered (or not) within these processes and how might it impact upon notions of collective identity?

The Falkland Islands are a relevant site to investigate these issues because of the ways they have been continually imagined and historicized, in and through media discourse: as a site of contested political ownership; and as a site of UK nationalist

politics; and as a site of commemoration and memorialization. Argentina claims to have inherited the Falklands from the Spanish in the early eighteenth century, the British argue the Islands have been a British colony since the mid seventeenth century. The short but brutal war in 1982 was one of the most prominent outcomes of these ongoing contestations resulting in a British victory. For many, the British media coverage of this war was shaped by powerful myths of British identity from which only a story of nationalism, bravery and victory unfolded (Anderson, 2011; Aulich, 1992; Foster, 1999; Wilcox, 1992) that now forms part of a normative landscape around which the Falklands are constructed, (re)constructed and remembered. Even narratives self-determination and sovereignty contestation - that have featured heavily in the media and which invite a different imagining of the Islands - have been intricately linked to the 1982 war. Consequently, despite the existence of alternative frames through which the Falklands could be represented (nature, economy, self-governance) it is war that emerges as the primary mode through which the Islands and Islanders have been portrayed. In British media these frames have tended to (re)evoked and (re)tell stories of the 1982 war through - to borrow from Hoskins (2004:6) – media ‘flashframes’ that in turn stimulate a remembering of the Falklands through a relatively static memory lens: one centered on war, remembrance, sacrifice and victory As Aulich (1992: 11) has suggested it is the military achievements (and losses) and the political fall out of the Falklands war that are (re)produced, (re)constructed and (re)marketed in a culture industry which represents the present as the pastiche of a partially illusory past.

In assigning special significance to the 1982 war then, the media have played a decisive role in defining, sustaining and generating consensus regarding a history of the Falklands that is centered around war, not only mediating a particular and often mythologized version of Falklands history through the collected memories of others, but also evoking and producing a collective remembering in the process (see Olick, 1999). This was especially the case in the build up to and during the 30th Anniversary of the Falklands war where all of the different - and at times conflicting - ‘imaginings’ of the Islands were implicitly evoked or explicitly represented in the political and media rhetoric. As with all acts of commemoration the past was recovered, re-told and remembered with particular consequences for those involved in the acts of (re)telling

and remembering. Whilst this was not unique to 2012, there were particular factors apparent during the 30th Anniversary that (re)ignited these conflicting ‘imaginings’. The first was the (re)evoking of the 1982 conflict by President Kirchner of Argentina in her renewed claims to the sovereignty of the Islands that were framed within allegations of the British colonization and militarization of the Islands. In response, the British Government, publicly declared support for the Falkland Islanders’ right to self-determination (as laid out in the UN Charter) and in doing so attempted to (re)stabilize wider diplomatic tensions within the South Atlantic. The second was that the Falkland Islands Government (FIG), in collaboration with the British Government, made considerable efforts to promote the Islands as having undergone significant economic, political and cultural development since 1982 attempting to represent the Islands as ‘Proud, resourceful and self sufficient’.¹ Despite this, media coverage of the 30th Anniversary and its accompanying representations of loss and victory threatened to unsettle and challenge these efforts as the memory of war was appropriated for political point scoring.

The Research

It is within this context that the wider ethnographic project from which the data in this paper is taken was conducted. The wider data corpus included the combined methods of textual analysis, ethnographic fieldwork and qualitative interviews with the British military, the Falklands Islands Government (FIG), Falkland Islanders and the media (particularly the BBC) between October 2011 and November 2012 in the build up to and during the 30th Anniversary commemorative activities. The project initially sought to explore how the differently ‘imagined’ Falkland Islands and the tensions that lie between them were negotiated and rationalized by all of these actors during the 30th Anniversary. It was guided by questions regarding the relative significance assigned to the 30th commemorative year and the extent to which this might be underpinned by rationales of political and public diplomacy and/or a recognized need to memorialize the Falklands past for those who took part (see Maltby, *forthcoming*). As part of this, I visited the Falklands Islands in June 2012 to conduct observational

fieldwork and qualitative interviews with relevant parties including Falkland Islanders. It is this data that is presented here. The interviewees were recruited through a variety of methods, some through contacts made during my travel to the Islands, others were approached directly in fieldwork settings and others still through snowball sampling. A total of ten interviewees were recruited whose anonymity was guaranteed as a condition of interview. The observational fieldwork took place across a number of different settings including official engagements (the Liberation Day Ball, official memorial services, and the Falklands Islands Defense Force celebration ceremony) and informal settings such as social events and home visits. It was during this fieldwork that I was able to gain insight into some of the complex shared remembering practices that emerged from interactions among the Islanders, and between the Islanders and the media.

Remembering

Before embarking on the analysis of this data, let me first outline the parameters of what I mean by ‘remembering’ so as to avoid the sticky and unsettled debates regarding what constitutes memory. The first position I draw upon in my use of the term ‘remembering’ is unsurprisingly that of Halbwach (1992) for whom memory is socially determined wherein the shared experiences of a social group, and their common reservoir of remembrance culminate in the formation of collective memory. This process is always in flux with the composition of the social group, the entry of new forms of information and the relative importance of particular types of remembering to the group over time. For Halbwach then, memory is always a reconstruction of the past that builds upon previous pasts, but always in relation to the social group. Hence, it is in the collective act of people engaging in a remembering together for a purpose – whatever that might be - that memories become formed. Should this activity cease, so too, eventually does the memory. For the purposes of this paper, it is the intersection of media in this process that is of interest in relation to how and why particular types of ‘memories’ become constituted and (re)constituted. In this way, it pays due credence to Olick’s distinction between collected memories (as the aggregate individual memories of a group) and collective memory that is

formed by public – or in this case mediated – representations. Thus it is with Halbwach’s notion of the collective and social group that this paper considers the powerful role of the media as integral to the processes of remembering in what others have termed the Halbwachian ‘leap’ from the personal to the concrete (how people remember) to the collective and metaphorical (how societies remember) (Neiger et al, 2011:12; see also Gedi and Elam, 1996; Schwartz, 1991). Media-memory in this regard is understood in accordance with Neiger et al’s (2011:19) contention that it is not merely a channel for or representation of memory, but rather a ‘phenomenon in itself’ that deserves particular scholarly attention.

At the same time, it is the point at which the media enters into this process that I depart from Halbwach’s use of the term memory and instead take up Winter’s (2006) notion of collective ‘remembrance’ rather than memory. Memory is fluid, emotional, and often inherently personal. In contrast, remembrance, and collective remembrance, as Winter suggests, stresses the processes by which people engage in remembering together in a manner where agency, motivation and context are emphasized:

“To privilege ‘remembrance’ is to insist on specifying agency, on answering the question who remembers, when, where, and how? And on being aware of the transience of remembrance, so dependent on the frailties and commitments of the men and women who take the time and effort to engage in it”.

(Winter, 2006:3)

Winter’s notion of remembrance therefore directs our attention to a collective development and sharing of a sense of the past, particularly a past to which there may not be direct experiential connection (see also Winter & Sivan, 1999). This is not to dismiss, or write out individual memories but rather to locate individual memories within the social phenomenon of remembrance. For the purposes of this paper, it allows us to consider what Falkland Islanders are (collectively) doing when they act as a group to conjure up particular narratives and memories of the past *for* the media, and what this might reveal about how they want to be remembered *in* the media. This is important because at the core of these processes are questions of power and

identity; how might ‘remembering’ be informed by, or inform, notions of collective identity and allegiance, and how might a public performance of remembering in the media leverage power – or be conceived of as enabling the leverage of power - for those involved?

In the following then I start by outlining how Islanders made (temporary and imagined) claims to agency in their articulations of being an *object of* media enquiry wherein they become active participants in the production of media texts about the Falklands, and through which they made claims to a particular identity. I then consider how they simultaneously articulated a disavowal of agency through their being *subject to* media representations wherein they experience the reproduction and reactivation of particular identities as a result of interpellation with media texts as both object and subject. It is this simultaneous collapse of being both *object* and *subject* that I locate the potentially profound implications this may be having on their understanding, negotiation and performance of identity, that is (at times) at odds with their everyday existence. From this I suggest that it is through the Islander’s ‘story’ that we can better locate, and understand, the particular dynamics and power relations embedded within practices of media-remembering. Questions about the authenticity of a mediated Falklands – or indeed a remembered Falklands – thus became secondary to issues of identity formation, power and agency *for and among the Islanders*.

Being an ‘Object of’ Media: Reproductions

Being an ‘object of media’ is defined here as the activity that Islander’s engage in when they become an information source and/or object of enquiry from which media texts are produced. By volunteering or being called upon by the media to remember, narrate or comment for the sole purpose of generating media coverage about the Falklands they become authors of their own past (and present) for a wider public audience. By virtue of their remembering ‘together’ – in Winter’s terms – Islander’s are not just authoring for themselves but on behalf of all Islanders in order to define their identity in particular ways. This allows them to bestow the Islands, and

themselves, with meanings that resonate within their own community but also beyond, particularly in Argentina and the UK. In short, the act of remembering becomes conflated with the act (re)presenting their identity and the Islands in particular ways from which they hope to benefit.

With this in mind, it is also noteworthy that the Islanders interviewed for this research often made explicit connections between their sense of identity and the importance of their history, or more accurately the need '*not to forget*' their history. Two key issues arose from these discussions that are pertinent to the ways in which they remembered collectively and which frame this paper. The first is that 'history' for the Islanders tended to be conceived as offering them agency and leverage in their assertions of identity. As one Islander stated: "*Yes, history is important to us. We have to use it as a political tool*". The second is that when referring to their 'history' Islanders were most often in fact referring to a specific point in their history, namely the 1982 war: "*We really need to keep the memories alive of what happened, keep remembering the war*". In this regard – and in the context of the 30th Anniversary and the contested sovereignty claims - when Islanders emphasized the need '*not to forget*' what they appeared to be articulating was the critical role that their (re)construction of an (imagined or otherwise) war past plays in relation to needs of their present socio-political environment (see also Halbwachs, 1992; Schwartz, 1982), particularly one that requires political power brokering.

War – as part of the Falklands history – thus became important to their remembering as a site through which they could develop and construct a sense of their present (and future). This was especially evident in the way the war was utilized as a specific benchmark in the temporal configuration of Falklands history, almost as a point of radical transformation.

This is what happened 30 years ago [1982 war] and this is what it has allowed us to become, this is how we have developed, this is our future

The Falkland Islands are a very prosperous nation. For example, the Government pays for kid's university education including accommodation and some spending money, but pre 82 we only had a few scholarships a year

Before the war we lived on UK subsidy and our only income was from agriculture, but after the war we licensed people to fish which kick started the economy

What we see in these quotes is a future orientedness. They have directedness - in Ricoeur's (1984) terms - that foregrounds the future of the Islands as a linear and progressive outcome of the past. However, the war was *not* expressed as the cause of progress. Rather, it was a temporal marker that allowed Islanders to employ comparatives and narrative distinctions between '*what was*' and '*what is now*' that, in turn, enabled them to assert the economic social, political progress of the Islands in the present. This becomes important in relation to their 'being an object' because the Islanders were unequivocal about the extent to which they came into public (and global) consciousness as a direct result of the war. As one interviewee stated: '*The war put us on the map*'. Consequently, aware of the significance of the war as a historical event that resonates within the wider public and political sphere, Islander's use the war as temporal marker not just because it reverberates at a local level but because it is a recognizable historical point among wider public(s). War, in this sense, serves a function in their remembering, and acts a point through which agency is claimed. It points to a well known moment of Falklands history that - through constant re-mediation - enables the Islanders to keep the Islands '*on the map*' in the broader public consciousness. But this also draws attention to the potential for a collapse of remembering with representing when 'being an object'; where private (community, individual memories) become conflated with public (media mnemonic memories) as much to keep the Falklands alive in public memory as to preserve a collective remembering at a local level. And it is in this context that we can best locate how and why Islander's make (temporary and imagined) claims to agency in their discussions about 'being an object'.

When Islanders discussed 'being an object' in the research interviews, they declared a long-standing relationship with the media in which they were relatively familiar with 'being an object' (either individually or collectively) courtesy of continual media interest in the Islands since 1982. As one Islander stated:

Yes, Islanders are media savvy, especially this year, we have had media from all over the world courtesy of Argentina but it gave us an opportunity to put our point across

Here we see agential expressions regarding the possession of the skills and knowledge required to ‘be an object’ in which the power of the media could be (and was) harnessed for the benefit of the community. Alongside this however, Islanders also suggested that the unprecedented media interest bestowed upon them in 2012 - courtesy of the 30th Anniversary and the contested sovereignty claims – had created a fortuitous platform in which they could ‘tell’ the progressive narrative (by which I mean advancement from the past) of the Island’s current and future economic sustainability and prosperity with relative ease:

We have just walked into a perfect storm really... What it has done for us is got the world talking about us and that has generated interest which has given us the opportunity to start saying some of the things that we want to be saying about us and that we want people to understand about us. So its actually gone quite well for us in that respect because we haven’t actually had to be particularly proactive in trying to get our messages out because these opportunities have just been coming at us and we have been jumping on them.

In these dual articulations of being ‘media savvy’ and encountering the ‘perfect storm’ Islanders suggested a direct correspondence between media frames and what they were seeking to convey - and be represented as - in the media. Engaging in ‘being an object’ was thus simultaneously articulated as an opportunity – *‘to say some of the things that we want to be saying’* - and a conscious, deliberate and rational act to assert a particular image of the Falklands from which they would benefit. We see this in the quote below where the desirability of the Islands is foregrounded as one of the main reasons for the high levels of media attention, despite the war also being a predictable topic of media coverage:

I have worked with 90 different television crews, its not all about the war but why Argentina are so interested in us and why are the Falklands so desirable

We see something similar in the following, where the convergence of the media's information needs and the Islander's desire to represent a 'progressive' Falklands becomes signified through those who are 'wheeled out' to become 'an object' of media enquiry; namely the next generation of Islanders or those responsible for (present and future) economic prosperity. But more than this, 'being an object' is articulated here as natural, spontaneous and honest (*'we are just talking'*), as though a 'true' Falklands (and the Islanders) is simply 'there', waiting to be – and in turn will be – represented by the media.

We have been wheeling people out all year – school kids, university students, private fishing companies etc. – and not a single person has had to be pre-scripted or put a foot wrong, we are just talking

Taken together, what we see across all of these extracts is a simultaneous collapse of: a) how Islanders want to remember (and be remembered) in the media, as active and agential participants in their own history and future; and b) how they believe this is achievable when 'being an object'. Within this, there are claims to agency expressed in a number of different but converging ways. First, through the suggestion that they have a clear, committed and unfaltering sense of collective identity that results in a cohered approach to their 'being an object'. Second, through the suggestion that the power to author narratives about the Falklands in the media resides as much in their (natural, honest) commitment to 'being an object' as it does with the media themselves. And third, through the suggestion that their motivation and ability to remember *and* represent the Islands and themselves as progressive, self-sustaining and economically prosperous is uncompromised and uncompromising when 'being an object'. Here then they articulate a particular sense of identity and agency through the perceived (and potentially imagined) convergence of media frames *and* their motivation and commitment to remember and be understood in particular ways. In short, they assert claims to agency *with* and *through* media because they believe it will bestow them with relative power.

Yet, there is a dual authoring process when Islanders engage in ‘being an object’, one in which the media become the ultimate determinant of the final, mediated, and public narrative. Whilst the media perceive (and often present) themselves as authoritative voices of neutrality and objectivity they operate within competitive commercial and institutional environments that can have a decisive impact on how they define, interpret and re-interpret the past – and the remembering of others - in accordance with professional norms, ratings, legal restrictions, and often in a manner that legitimates their professional, commercial and public status (Meyers, 2007; Neiger, Meyers & Zandberg, 2011; Zandberg, 2010). Consequently, when Islanders engage in ‘being an object’ in order to harness the power of the media, they are actually entering a relationship that is defined by an unequal distribution of power in which they will be remembered but not necessarily on their own terms. In turn, their agential expressions - and the extent to which ‘being an object’ is uncompromised and uncompromising – becomes questionable.

With this in mind, it is perhaps unsurprising that despite their (temporary and imagined) claims to agency, the Islanders concurrently argued that ‘being an object’ was *only* possible if they could speak to (and through) dominant and pre-determined media frames that focused on the 1982 war:

The majority [journalists] only want to cover the war stuff... I think the Falkland Islands is synonymous with the war for them

The people who are being sent down to report are usually Defence Correspondents, Allan Little, Deborah Hayes, Carolyn Wyatt... That sets the agenda in advance. The Sun [newspaper] sent down Simon Weston [Falklands veteran] which reflects the obsession with the conflict, recollections of the conflict and the ‘how did you feel’ approach.

Here in particular we see how the Islanders’ progressive narratives of the Falklands - as wholly focused on the present and future – were in fact compromised in their mediation, not just by the media imposition of history but by a particular version of history (and remembering) that was tied to sustained shared readings of a political, social and ideological (war) past (see also Connerton, 1989; Kitch, 2008; Meyers,

2007; Neiger, et al, 2011; Schwartz, 1982; Zelizer, 1992). As others have noted, informed by commercial, ideological and professional logics the media will often frame narratives about the present within a context of the past precisely because it will have cultural and social resonance (see Berkowitz, 2011; Edy and Daradanova, 2006; Robinson, 2009; Tuchman, 1973).

For the Islanders themselves this was not unusual. Rather, the media focus on the 1982 war was considered to be both predictable and normative, leaving them with little recourse to provide alternative accounts of a Falklands. This generated particular tensions for some who stated that they were rarely – if at all – recruited by the media and only then if they could remember or speak to experiences of the war, and usually in relation (or response) to veterans:

The media are really only talking to the Vets, or if they are talking to locals it is only those who remember the war or who remember the night of the invasion

The wider implication for Islanders was that their remembering became contained within, and constrained by, dominant media frames that emphasized war and British sacrifice. Those Islanders who were called upon by the media to ‘remember’ were only those who reiterated these frames either through recollections of a war experience or expressions of gratitude to the British Soldiers who had ‘liberated them’. This was also evident in resulting media texts where Islanders were positioned and framed as those who are – or indeed should be - grateful for the sacrifices incurred during the war as we see in the following extract taken from the BBC news:

Islanders have approached them [Veterans] very often simply to say ‘thank you’ and express their gratitude for the sacrifices made for the freedom of these Islands.
Commentary from Carolyn Wyatt at remembrance service in Port San Carlos, BBC Television News, 13th June 2012

Similarly, in another example taken from the BBC’s Radio 5Live’s panel discussion between Islanders and a Falklands veteran (Martin), we see presenter Tony

Livesey implicitly frames the Islander as someone who *would* or *should* be grateful for the sacrifices of British soldiers:

Livesey: When you meet people like Martin [Falklands veteran] what can you say to them, what do you say to the veterans who fought for you?

Islander: We say thank you, what they have done for us is very hard to describe...they fought for us, they freed us

Livesey Show (BBC Radio 5Live, 14th June 2012)

What we see across these texts is an indication of how the Islanders are *being remembered* and represented in and by the media in ways contrary to how they *want to remember* and *be remembered*. For example, in contrast to their ambition to narrate future orientedness, in the text (and in their being an object) they become wholly located in the past. Moreover, whilst their ambition was to foreground their active participation in the progress of the Islands since 1982, in the text they become defined as (relatively passive) recipients of opportunities bestowed upon them by the sacrifices of others. These textual representations not only undermine the Islanders (temporary and imagined) claims to agency described above, they also raise questions as to the possible implications for the Islanders sense of identity as they become located and implicated in a subjectivity that only asserts their (necessary) debt of gratitude.

Obligated Remembrance

To interrogate the repercussions this may be having for Islanders I want to draw upon Ricoeur's notion of obligated memory and 'duty of memory'. For Ricoeur remembering (and memory) is fundamentally tied to a debt to the past for the sake of the future. He contends that to be indebted to the past means not only a responsibility *for* a particular narrative or understanding of the past, but also a responsibility *to* the past for one's very identity. In other words, Ricoeur foregrounds a moral duty to remember, and uphold continued remembering, precisely because of the debt incurred by the actions of those in the past - to whom we owe them a large part of our identity - in order to exercise justice, to give back, or transmit, whatever it is we have received

(see also Bienenstock, 2010; Hannoum, 2005; Misztal, 2010). As Ricoeur himself states: *‘It is justice which extracts from traumatizing remembrances their exemplary value, turns memory into a project, and it is this project of justice that gives the form of the future and of imperativeness to the duty of memory’* (2004:107). Ricoeur’s understanding of remembrance is thus obligatory, honorable, and necessary. But it is also functional, conciliatory and performative: a means through which to realign that debt.

The notion of obligated memory – or what I term here ‘obligated remembrance’ for the reasons stated above - is useful here because it provides us with a framework through which we can understand what is being asserted through the dominant media frame seen above that foregrounds debt, gratitude, justice, and an homage to the past for one’s identity; what we might term the ‘obligated remembrance media frame’. This frame, and the texts that result, not only offer some indication as to what is deemed necessary (or obligatory) to (continually and necessarily) remember by (British) media producers about the Falklandsⁱⁱ - namely war sacrifice – but also how the Islanders public (and possibly private) identity becomes wholly located in, and constrained by, this remembering as a result; as beneficiaries of the debt incurred. To put another way, the obligated media frame invites a necessary positioning of the Islanders as those who *have* to perform obligated remembrance precisely because it is their duty.

But my concern here is not just with how the Islanders become represented in the text, but more how this may have implications for their wider sense of identity in the everyday. As Zelizer (1992) and Schudson (1992) have argued, mediated representations of the past can have distinct repercussion on how communities and individuals subsequently relate to their past, and the relevance of the past to the present and future, and it is here that we can consider how textual mediations of ‘obligated remembrance’, or the constraints of the obligated remembrance media frame, may be impacting on the Islanders in different ways.

With this in mind, let us consider the following extracts from media texts in which we see an assertion of a debt of gratitude to the sacrifice of others in accordance with a performance of obligated remembrance.

I think of all the families whose loved ones haven't returned. Yep [starts to become tearful] and for that we will always be grateful

Trudy McPhee Interviewed for BBC News, 14th June 2012

We are proud of how much this country has changed since the war. We are a country that has its own industry, we are a beautiful country...what we want to be is something that makes the whole war worthwhile and the fact that men died for this country, and dies for us, and we are incredibly grateful for that. And that's part of the reason that we've worked hard to develop the Falkland Islands – it's a sense of obligation and I mean that really sincerely. There is even a degree of guilt I think but what we want is to be worth something, we want to be worth what happened

Lisa Watson interviewed for 'Return to the Falklands' (March 2012, ITV 1)

One way in which we interpret these extracts is that Lisa and Trudy are responding to the demands of the (predictable and normative) obligated remembrance media frame. Indeed, Lisa's 'performance' of obligated remembrance in particular can be read as an implicit statement of debt recognition and realignment because she stresses the beauty, progressive economy and self-sufficiency of the Islands (ideas that we would associate with the progressive narrative discussed earlier) as exemplars of why and how the Islands are worthy of the debt incurred.

But there is another way we might interpret these extracts, although not necessarily at odds with the first. That is, that in their interpellation with media texts (and the obligated remembrance media frame) Trudy and Lisa are in fact reinforcing or identifying with a particular subject positions in the text that emphasize a *need* to perform obligated remembrance. To put another way, they may be identifying with and reproducing particular identities as those who engage in obligated remembrance as a result of the accumulation and culmination of previous historical (media) positionings and identifications in which they get 'caught' (see Gray, 1987).

Being 'Subject to' Media: Reactivation

It is in the process of potential identification and investment in subject positions of obligated remembrance that we can best locate how Islanders might be 'subject to' the media and how this may be having repercussions on their sense of identity. 'Being subject to' media is understood here to mean the real lived tensions that result from the processes of subjugation as a consequence of interpellation and being a subject of media representations that may be having a profound impact on the formulation of identity. This becomes expressed in a number of ways by Islanders that indicate the extent to which they feel continually contained and constrained as a consequence of their investment in, and response to, subject positions in the text that emphasize obligated remembrance.

Perhaps the first and most significant way in which Islanders expressed the constraints of media subjectivity was through what we might term temporal stasis; a sense of being 'pulled back' in to the past, and the past being 'pulled forward' into the present in a manner that disabled them from moving away from being located within the subject of war. They specifically related this feeling of stasis to media coverage, and especially of returning veterans:

The problem is not with the returning vets but the fact that the media want to come over and make something of it

Everyday we get people coming to visit us to lay their ghosts to rest but the Islanders have never had an opportunity to put it behind them. There has been a perpetual holding back for 30^{years} because we are reminded of it all the time by the media

This latter quote is indicative of the extent to which the media were explicitly held up as those most responsible for temporal stasis precisely because they sustain a constant reminder of the past through the lens of obligated remembrance. In this sense, the media and the texts they produce become a powerful site for the reactivation of past events (see Hoskins, 2004) at both an individual and collective level that emphasizes debt, sacrifice and also guilt.

The second way in which Islanders articulated the real and lived tensions of a 'reactivation' was through the increasing emergence of trauma among fellow community members. One interviewee, for example, cited an example of an Islander who is 'traumatized' as a result of the proliferation of media texts that consistently (re)assert the need to remember and recognize those who died to liberate the Islands. Another implied a direct correlation between the increasing emergences of trauma in the community and media generated reactivations. Here a direct correlation is made between temporal stasis and feelings of guilt and trauma as a consequence of the media 'obligated remembrance' frame that 'reactivates' annually:

All this media attention.... One girl told me the other day that for 30 days this is all she has ever known, that one day in the year she goes from that day to feeling people were killed giving her freedom, be thankful and all that. Then she gets over it and a year goes by and it's 'people died for you and your freedom'. It's almost a guilt thing.

There are a lot of people here – ordinary farmers – who, when this dramatic, traumatic thing happened [the war] they have been able to put it behind them and compartmentalize it in their heads. But as time goes on, all this media attention, we are seeing more and more PTSD if that's what you want to call it

For others, trauma was manifest in a literal (re)living of an original traumatic war experience. These instances of trauma were often described as occurring in response to media enquiries around particular sites of battle, especially Goose Green in which over 100 Islanders had been held captive by Argentinian forces during the war. Indeed, a number of interviewees cited that those involved in the original Goose Green captivity were those who were disproportionately involved in being an 'object of', and 'subject to' the media, with the effect of having to relive their trauma again and again:

People are not allowed to forget the trauma they went through. If you look at what happened in Goose Green and people locked in the community hall, every year they go back through the same thing. They are almost not allowed to get over it because, dare I say it, of the media

Throughout all the interviews, what emerged most was the extent to which annual media reactivations were anticipated by virtue of their predictability, which, in turn, served to further perpetuate feelings of trauma and guilt. Cumulatively then, it was not just media reactivation that was identified as constraining and containing Islanders, but the predictable repetitiousness and ‘perpetual-ness’ of it that is both cumulative, long-lasting and future oriented: “*But as time goes on....we are seeing more and more PTSD*’.

The third and final way in which the Islanders expressed anxieties regarding their engagement with the media was through the emergence of disruptive and unsettling tensions within the community - a form of existential community introspection - as a consequence of their subjective and moral positioning within the text:

A lot of people here - because of this constant drip feed from the media - are asking questions of themselves or others in the community

The more you isolate off what an individual did under certain conditions [in media coverage] the more, I think, people are asking the same questions of ‘what did I do under those circumstances’ and once you ask those questions of yourself you have to be very confident of the answer in terms of did I do the right thing.

Here we can see the extent to which the media are explicitly identified as the primary reason for these tensions: because of the interventions, reactivations generated by the media and especially because they ‘single out’ particular people - or the particular actions of people during the war – that ignite wider, and potentially irreconcilable moral, ethical and social questions within the community. And it is perhaps here, that the ability of the media to disrupt and disempower at a localized, community and individual level became more explicitly linked to issues of identity (who am I, who are we) and obligated remembrance (‘*did I do the right thing*’) in the Islanders’ articulations.

But what emerged most was the Islanders' identification with, but simultaneous rallying against, the constraints of obligated remembrance. Here in particular Islanders were overt about the tensions and contradictions resulting from the amalgamation of remembering *with* and *through* the media (being subject to) *and* attempts to remember and represent the Islands in particular ways *in* the media (being an object of). From this it was apparent that Islanders understood and negotiated obligated remembrance in quite paradoxical terms; on the one hand privately wanting to move beyond it because the moral duty to continually remember becomes constraining, whilst on the other hand wanting to be publically seen as those who will not, and cannot move beyond it because of the moral implications *and* the power it might confer:

We can't not be grateful because its only right and proper but people are so terrified of seeming disloyal or disrespectful to what happened 30 years ago that it is holding us back in a way

What appeared to result was a confused sense of identity among Islanders that was recursively shaped through interpellation, and sedimented through their being both 'object' and subject'. Here, the public and private identities of Islanders were fused with the subject and object positionings of the media but in a manner that had implications beyond their engagement with the media. As one Islander stated:

The [media] focus is always on the troops but I think that cuts across the psyche of the community in terms of everything. There is this debt of gratitude that is so overwhelming that it is causing a bit of an identity crisis because, you know, do we fly a British flag or a Falkland's flag? Is it a bit disloyal not to fly a British flag? I don't know how you get round that

There are a number of things we might take from this quote. The first is that it implicitly conveys how Islanders become located within the constraints of the obligated remembrance media frame - articulated as the constant media focus on 'the troops' – not just because of the existence of the frame, but because the frame resonates with, or perhaps generates, a sense of identity within the community that is founded upon obligated remembrance: *'There is this debt of gratitude that is so*

overwhelming'. The second, and related, is that identity – and indeed the crisis of it – is articulated here through a material but crucially visible symbol: the flag. Inherent within this conceptualization of identity then is the potential convergence of remembering and *representing* noted earlier, where the private (community, individual memories) become conflated with the public and mediated (media mnemonic memories) precisely because it will be (or has in the past been) mediated. The formulation of this identity thus implies consideration, informed by the knowledge that it will be (or has been) mediated as a representation of the Islander community, a statement of intent and allegiance: '*Is it a bit disloyal not to fly the British flag*'. The third is that when we combine these factors, we can see how they in turn may feed into a necessary and functional performance and/or representation of 'mediated' obligated remembrance (gratitude to the 'troops', gratitude for UK intervention) because of the relative power that this may confer at a wider diplomatic, political, social, economic level. But more critically, the quote also implies that engagement in obligated remembrance extends beyond Islanders being both an object and subject of media in manner that '*cuts across the psyche of the community in terms of everything*'. It is perhaps here then, in this final quote, that we can most vividly see the critical role the media play in the tensions and negotiations of a public identity – considered necessary to harness political power – that may be extending to inform an internal identity within the community.

The point to note here is that obligated remembrance, as a pointer of Falkland Islanders' identity, may be recursively shaped in and through the practice of engaging with the production and reading of media texts which consistently (and historically) have emphasized the duty to remember the debt incurred by war and sacrifice. In other words, in their attempts to escape from and reshape the constraining subjectivity of dominant media frames (as both object and subject), Islanders might actually become part of the reproduction of particular identities resulting from – as noted earlier – positionings and identifications in which they get 'caught'. This being the case, as Henriques et al (1984) suggests, there may be an investment in such identifications – despite the tensions (trauma, guilt, introspection) – because of the relative power that is conferred as a result: to sustain a presence '*on the* (global media) *map*' as a progressive and generative nation worthy of independence. Indeed,

in the context of continued political contestation and a potentially unstable future there is benefit and power to be gained from asserting a particular identity that reinforces gratitude for previous (and continuing) British involvement.

Consequently, Islanders may be complicit in the constructions and reproductions of their own identity as fundamentally tied to a war history and obligated remembrance precisely because of the resulting investment and engagement; what De Lauretis (1987:9) terms the “*product and process of representation and self representation*”. This investment and engagement is not necessarily rational, nor conscious. Instead, it contains contradictory tensions that are empowering in one context - for example on the wider, mediated, geo-political stage - whilst disempowering in another - for example in a local, individualized context.

Concluding Remarks

I started this article by claiming that at the intersection of media and remembering (as an act, text, process) are critical issues of agency, identity and power that are important areas for interrogation because of the implications for all involved; the remembering, the remembered and those who represent them. I was suggesting that scholarly engagement should continue moving beyond examining the role of media in the formation and sustaining of collective memory to include the ways that those who are remembered or remember *in* and *through* media texts become implicated in these processes. My ambition here was to contribute to these wider scholarly engagements by using the ‘story’ of the Falkland Islanders to reveal particular dynamics and power relations that are embedded within practices of media-remembering.

In this way, I would suggest that the Islanders’ story allows us insight into the extent to which the media— or the power believed to be conferred by the media — becomes central to the processes of remembering in the competition to privilege one’s own remembering publicly. Yet, the media’s distinct role in this competition means that those who remember in the media (as an object of media enquiry) are forced to engage in a far more explicit political form of remembering than they would perhaps

otherwise, precisely because their remembering becomes conflated with the act of representing (themselves, their history, their identity). Whilst this may imply the possibility of agency, it is in the conflation of remembering and representing that agency is in fact more likely to be denied.

Relatedly, the Islanders' story reveals that despite investment in media power, rarely can it be harnessed at a local level and in accordance with the aims of those remembering because of the unequal power relations that inform the relationship between those remembering and the media. Instead, as Zelizer (2011:28) states when remembering enters the flows of media – particularly news media – it loses its locality, internal variation, nuance, and particularity because it is accommodated within wider institutional and commercial frameworks: it becomes squashed. Consequently, those remembering are transformed into those who are remembered in ways that locate, constrain and implicate them in a wider 'remembering' context not of their own making. It is here especially that agency and power is negated.

But perhaps the most important issue that emanates from the Islanders' story is how the culmination of the above processes intersect with, and have profound implications for a wider sense of identity and power among those remembering. By virtue of their investment, there is greater likelihood that those remembering become contained within and are unable to escape from the subjectivity imposed upon them by their engagements with the media (as object or subject) the results of which become played out in real and lived tensions, particularly in relation to the negotiation of (private and public) identity. If, as Hoskins (2015) states, our sense of self is dependent on our ability to *forget* as much as it is to remember, then those who are remembered, or implicated in a remembering that is bound by issues they would otherwise choose to forget, it is perhaps unsurprising that a confused sense of identity emerges from the influences and intrusions of media subjectivity. In short, and precisely because media enter into the production of remembrance activities, they have the potential to generate recourse to dominant narratives that constrain and restrict identities at both a collective/individual, public/private level. In this way, the media can be seen to not only shape who we are and how we remember, but also how we understand our 'selves' politically, socially and personally. This being the case,

they also *become* the context for the participation and celebration of and in remembering and the negotiation and projection of identity as a result. This is worthy of much greater consideration if we are to elucidate understandings of the complex links between agency, media, identity and remembering.

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ⁱ <http://www.falklands.gov.fk/> accessed May 2012

ⁱⁱ For a discussion of the possible motivations and processes behind the 'obligated remembrance media frame' please see Maltby, *forthcoming*.